

## Missouri Department of Conservation Joplin Area Office

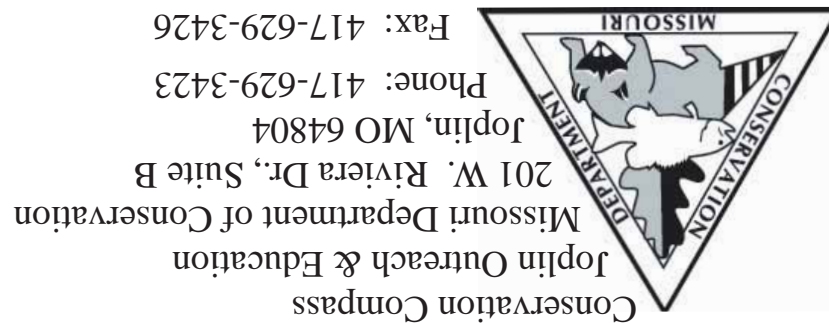
MDC Office Hours: Mon-Fri 8am - 5pm

Nature Center Hours: Tue-Sat 9am - 5pm  
Sun 11am - 4pm

### Discover Nature Backpacks!

Drop by our office and check out a backpack to take on the trails!

They are filled with field guides, a magnifying glass, a nature journal, and even binoculars!



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# Conservation Compass

Joplin Area Outreach & Education

January

February

March 2009



## The Single Parent and Children (or any parent, grandparent, scout leader...)



Recently I was asked the question, “As a single mom how can you expose your children to nature and look cool doing it?”

I was a single mother and can address the part about getting outside, but I am not so sure about the cool part. The world of nature may seem like a frightening place, after all that’s where you find poison ivy, ticks, and venomous snakes. True, but the outdoor world offers so much more, and with a little practice, you can avoid most of the unpleasant things. Recent surveys, books, and programs also stress the importance of getting your children outside. Children score higher on tests, weigh less, suffer less from depression, and have many other benefits from spending time in nature – and with you.

Start with the closest outdoor space, your yard or nearby park. Just go outside to look, listen, hear, and carefully touch. You and your children may be surprised at the diversity – many plants and animals thrive in an urban setting. Try focusing your attention by placing a circle of rope or string, about the size of a Frisbee, on the ground. Make at least one observation per season and put them in a journal. Don’t worry about the names; draw it if you don’t know it. If you need to identify something, stop by our office for one of our publications or go on-line to [www.mdc.mo.gov](http://www.mdc.mo.gov). *The Field Guide to Your Backyard* regularly featured in the newsletter also provides other great exploration ideas.

Once you have taken the first steps in exploring the outdoor world, check out the *Missouri Conservation Frontiers* program. This activity, and award-based program will assist you in discovering more about our natural resources and what you can do to protect them. For more details contact us or refer to the April – June 2008 issue of the *Conservation Compass* for Jeff Cantrell’s article, “A Message to Our Conservation Minded Youth.” You might also wish to join us for our free programs. Check out the center section of this newsletter for the Calendar of Events. For this quarter we will offer a variety of activities from an owl prowling to a workshop on tree selection and planting. Your children may not think of you as cool, but you will all reap the benefits of spending time together in the wonderful world of nature.

Cyndi A. Cogbill, Public Service Assistant  
[Cyndi.Cogbill@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:Cyndi.Cogbill@mdc.mo.gov)

### A New Year Brings Change..

Our newsletter is experiencing a facelift this year! You'll find the same great articles along with a NEW kids section and updated format. Also, help us welcome new staff members  
**AMY JUHALA and  
CYNDI COGBILL.**







Kevin Badgley  
Community Outreach Specialist  
Kevin.Badgley@mdc.mo.gov

## "Spruce" Up Your Yard!

"Spruce" up your yard with a recycled holiday tree. Strategically placed evergreen trees will provide both cover and nesting sites for all types of Missouri wildlife.

Live-cut holiday trees don't have to go out with the trash; instead they can take on a new life after the holidays when used as habitat for wildlife, or recycled as mulch and compost. Recycling a tree is a wise use of resources that benefits our wildlife and an alternative to having them thrown into landfills.

Many local communities shred holiday trees for mulch and compost if you can't find a use for them yourself.

Both urban and rural landowners can use their trees to build brush piles for wildlife habitat on land or in water - providing cover for native birds, mammals, fish, amphibians and reptiles. Brush piles are very effective near field borders, as well as undeveloped areas in suburban yards, or near water sources.

These trees make effective cover for rabbits, quail and other birds because the trees' limbs create usable space for hiding from predators or protection from the elements. Trees can also be weighted down and sunk in farm ponds to attract fish and increase habitat. Bundles of brush and trees provide an opportunity for the entire food chain to thrive.

Good sense should be used when transforming a tree into a wildlife habitat. Trees should not simply be tossed outdoors or into a public area. Receive permission from property owners before discarding the tree on private or public land or in ponds. Before disposing of your holiday tree, remember to remove all trimmings including tinsel, garland, lights and ornaments.

For more information on building wildlife habitat on land or in your pond stop by the MDC Joplin office and request "Wildlife Management for Missouri Landowners" or "The Pond Handbook". These resources are also available on-line at our web links:

[mdc4.mdc.mo.gov/applications/MDCLibrary/Library.aspx?ArtID=258](http://mdc4.mdc.mo.gov/applications/MDCLibrary/Library.aspx?ArtID=258)  
[mdc4.mdc.mo.gov/applications/MDCLibrary/Library.aspx?ArtID=22](http://mdc4.mdc.mo.gov/applications/MDCLibrary/Library.aspx?ArtID=22)

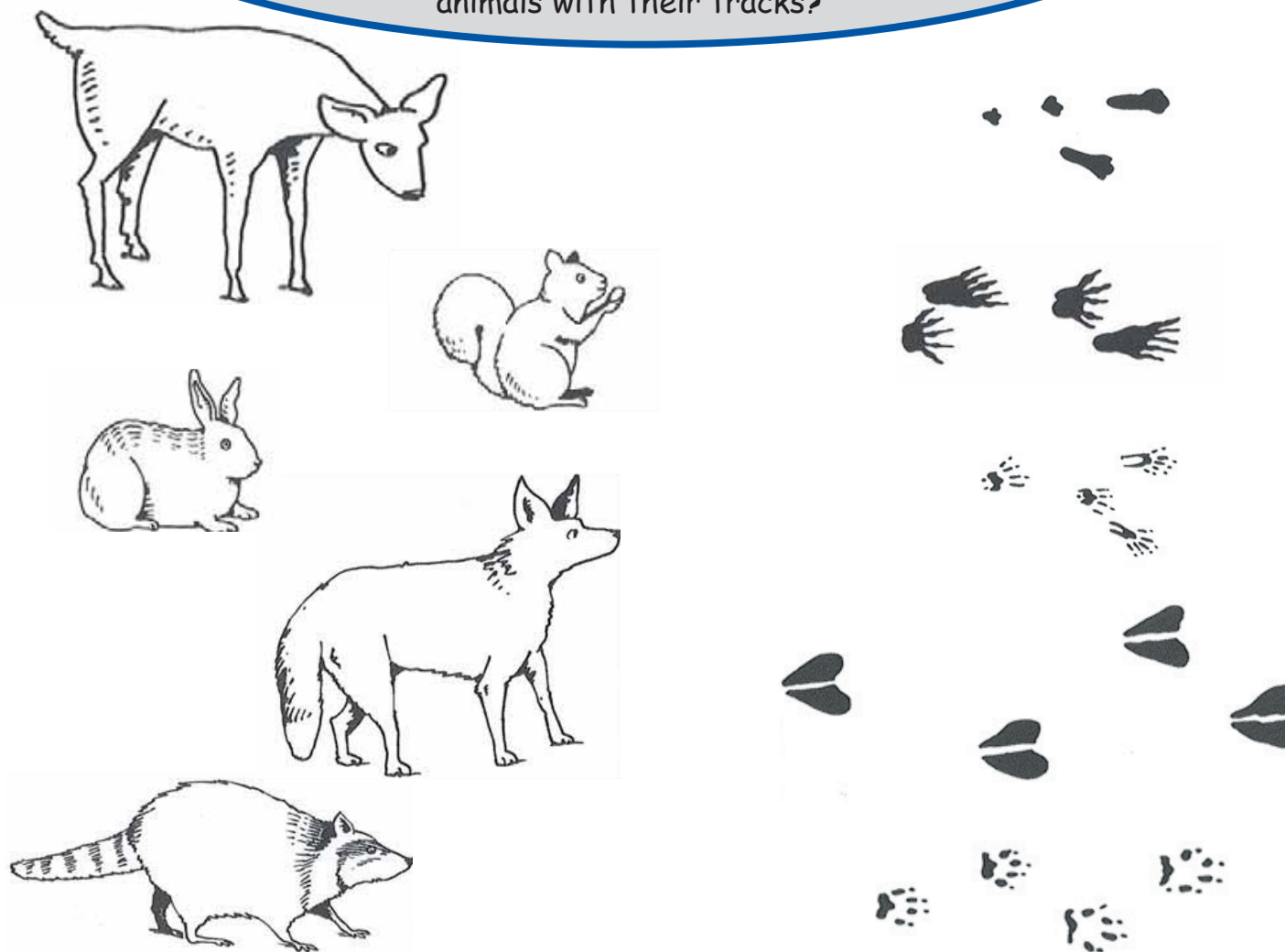


*Place leftover holiday trees at the base of feeders to provide cover for birds.*

# Conservation Kids



This is a great time of year to look for animal tracks! Take a hike after it snows and look for critter handprints (while making a few of your own!). Or check out the mud this spring to see where the wildlife has been. Can you match these Missouri animals with their tracks?



### Missouri Conservation Frontiers

Search along a stream or pond edge, or other damp area for wild animal tracks. Name the animal that made the tracks and, with your parent, make plaster casts of these tracks.

*This activity is from the MO Conservation Frontiers program. This free program helps youths learn about Missouri's natural resources and how to enjoy and protect them. As they complete the activities, they will earn points and receive special Frontiers awards! To enroll your child, classroom, or youth organization contact our office at (417) 629-3423.*





## Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Information

FISHING	OPEN	CLOSE
Black Bass (certain Ozark stream, see the Wildlife Code)	5/24/08	2/28/09
Gigging Non-game Fish	9/15/08	1/31/09
Trout Parks Catch and Release	11/14/08	2/09/09
HUNTING		
Coyotes	5/12/08	3/31/09
Crow	11/01/08	3/03/09
Deer - Archery	11/26/08	1/15/09
Late Youth Firearm	1/03/09	1/04/09
Furbearers	11/15/08	1/31/09
Quail	11/1/08	1/15/09
Rabbits	10/01/08	2/15/09
Ruffed Grouse	10/15/08	1/15/09
Turkey- Archery	11/26/08	1/15/09
TRAPPING		
Beaver and Nutria	11/15/08	3/31/09
Furbearers	11/15/08	1/31/09



## The WILD Side of Cooking

### Venison Chili - Kevin Badgley

#### Ingredients:

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| ½ c. olive oil   | 3 lbs. venison burger |
| 1 lg. onion  | ¼ c. mustard          |
| 6 cloves garlic  | 1Tbbs. cumin          |
| 1 lg. green pepper   | 1½ tsp. salt & pepper |
| 1 lg. can tomato puree   | 3 cans chili beans    |
| 4 Tbbs. Chili Seasoning  |                       |
| Sweet basil, Red pepper & Tabasco to taste                                       |                       |
| 2 cans Contadina garlic roasted tomatoes (do not drain)                          |                       |
| 1 can Rotel Extra Hot diced tomatoes & chilies, Cilantro or parsley for garnish. |                       |

#### Directions

Sauté onion, green pepper & garlic in olive oil. Add venison meat and brown. Do not drain. Add all other ingredients simmer on medium for 1 hour. Garnish with cilantro or parsley.



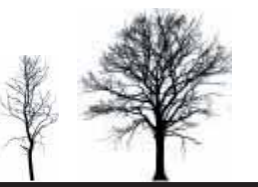
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## Forestry Focus

Jon Skinner, Urban Forester

Jon. Skinner@mdc.mo.gov



## Take It Easy With De-icers

Our mobile society can slip and slide to a crawl when a Missouri winter arrives. Chemicals used to melt ice and snow can mean safer traveling for cars and people. It also means real trouble for plants and soils. Nearly all ice melters are salts and they keep water from freezing when the temperature is less than 32° Fahrenheit.

These salts can splash onto nearby trees or enter through the roots via runoff. In both cases the tree's health is compromised. Stunted and deformed growth can occur and over time, with stronger concentrations, the tree can die.

### What Can You Do?

You can leach salt out of your tree's root zone by thoroughly watering the root area if salt contamination is suspected. However, some difficulties will be encountered with tight, high clay soils that do not have good internal drainage.

To alleviate the adverse effects of salt (NaCl) in the soil, powdered gypsum (CaSO<sub>4</sub>) should be used to promote its solubility and movement into the soil. Gypsum is a naturally occurring substance that will not pollute the environment. It is frequently used as a soil conditioner or for clearing muddy water in ponds and is available at garden centers in 50 pound bags. Rate of application will depend on the severity of salt contamination. Plants that have been weakened by heavy or chronic exposure to salt may not respond to gypsum treatment.

To help your tree, choose from these alternatives: abrasives like sand and cinders, and biodegradable de-icers made from alcohols, and corn and whey based products or a Calcium Magnesium Acetate (CMA).

### Recommendations For Applying Deicers

Remember all chemicals commonly used for melting ice can have a negative impact on the environment, but their use may be necessary during icy winter weather. Because of their adverse effects, it is our responsibility to use chemicals with care. Plants growing in areas which are subject to exposure to deicing chemicals should be protected by using these preventative measures:

1. Create drainage channels or barriers around plants where deicers are used.
2. Use only the amount of ice melting chemical needed to do the job. Practice moderation.
3. Use dark colored abrasives as an alternate or supplement to chemicals.
4. Use the least toxic chemical possible to achieve a safe surface.
5. Use common salt (NaCl) as a last resort.
6. Apply gypsum if sodium chloride (NaCl, common salt) contamination is anticipated.
7. Be especially careful in applying salts in late winter or early spring, or when the ground is not frozen.



Photo by Cyndi Cogbill







## The **WILD SIDE** to Private Lands

Randy Haas, Private Lands Conservationist

Randy.Haas@mdc.mo.gov



### Water, Water, Everywhere???

I was fortunate enough to be able to attend a recent water conservation conference in Joplin. Two speakers for this conference were from Atlanta and Seattle. They painted a very bleak picture of water shortage and related the very proactive attitude in dealing with these issues. Their region has made great strides in finding solutions to improve the situation and have been so efficient, in spite of the growing population in the northwestern United States; they have decreased their water consumption!

We in southwestern Missouri, where we have such an abundance of water sources, have a habit of taking our water for granted. A few of years ago we were suddenly reminded of how we are susceptible to water shortages, just like other areas of the country. The drought we faced started taking its toll, and Shoal Creek, along with others, started to lose flow to a point where it was threatening the water supply for Joplin! We suddenly were brought to the reality of how no one is totally removed from potential water issues, no matter where you may live.

Shoal Creek, Photo by Cyndi Cogbill



All of you who have property along a stream, or river, or even a temporary drainage ditch, should be aware of how important it is to protect those streams from erosion, siltation, or even nutrient runoff...all of which negatively affect the quality of water. We must start taking care of the water resources now before it becomes a more critical, desperate matter!

...we have a habit of taking our **water** for granted.

Even those of us who don't have stream or river frontage, can do our part to conserve water to make it go farther! This will also affect most of us in the pocketbook, since the cost of consuming water is, more than likely, going to go up! You can become more conscious of how you use water in your home and office. I was so inspired (and partly scared out of my wits) at the conference, I purchased a new washer and dryer (ones that are more water and electric efficient), and new toilet (using 1.28 gallons per flush), put a new aerator on the bathroom sink (using 1 gallon per minute), and put a new shower hose in the bathroom (using 1.5 gallons per minute).

If we all started using water more efficiently now, it may be easier to deal effectively with future water shortages, if (and more than likely when) they occur!



## The Agent's Angle



## The Slow Time

Adam Bracken, Conservation Agent

For many people, the term "hunting season" conjures up thoughts of hunter orange, high powered rifles, and deer camp. Many times the passing of deer season is also how hunters mark the end of their hunting season. This is probably why Conservation Agents often hear people tell us that we are getting ready to go into our "slow time" when December rolls around. While nothing compares to the chaos of the fall firearms deer season there are still plenty of hunting and fishing opportunities throughout the winter months to keep hunters and Agents busy.

While deer hunters watch the weather looking for a nice calm day, waterfowl hunters are hoping for the next cold front to come through bringing clouds, wind, and birds. Nothing will make a water fowler grumble more than a bluebird day with no wind. The clouds and wind make decoys more effective and the birds are usually just ahead of a cold front. The most dedicated of water fowlers will actually go out early on a cold morning

and break ice so they will have a place to set their decoys. While other hunters might question the sanity of such a thing water fowlers look at it as just part of a sport they love.

Hunter orange doesn't completely disappear once deer season passes. It is pretty common to see safety minded quail and rabbit hunters passing a winter day in the fields and draws of southwest Missouri. Though quail numbers aren't what they used to be, there are still those that love to get out and work their dogs and get some exercise. For me, rabbit hunting is one of the most enjoyable types of hunting available in Missouri. It never ceases to amaze me the way a beagle will stay on a trail and run a rabbit in circles all day until a hunter is finally able to get a shot.

So, when cabin fever starts to set in during these cold months remember that there are still plenty of opportunities to get out and hone your hunting skills. As for Agents, we'll rest after hunting season.....wait a minute, trout season starts March 1<sup>st</sup>!



Rabbit hunting with beagles

### Classic Conservation Cartoons

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"But archery season is closed."

For More Information  
on Hunting Season  
see page 10





# Teachers, Tracks, Treks and Trails

Jeff Cantrell, Conservation Education and Outreach  
Jeff.Cantrell@mdc.mo.gov

## Check Out A Trunk!

Homeschool parents, youth leaders and sponsors of Big Brothers, Big Sisters here is an opportunity to supplement your "Frontiers Program" for your students. Your 2009 outdoor studies and events can be jazzed up by reserving and borrowing one of our **Conservation Discovery Trunks**. Homeschool parents and teachers have been using the Conservation Department trunks for years to compliment their curriculum but these trunks can go beyond "classroom work". All trunks contain themed books for the students, educational props, cds, dvds, field guides and background information for the sponsor, counselor, or educator.

Trunk topics address an array of subjects and target a wide variety of grade levels. Topics such as bats, forest ecology, Lewis & Clark, monarchs, and owls are just some of the engaging trunks to supplement a Big Brother, Big Sister outing, merit badge activity or anything related.

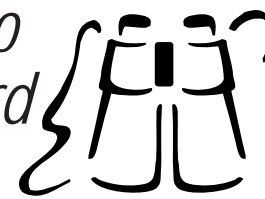


Lewis and Clark Trunk

Feel free to call or e-mail for a list of available items and how to reserve these resources and don't forget to utilize our free conservation programs and hikes for your group's learning experience. Please see our list of events; what better than a hike with a naturalist to add to your winter ecology unit ...



## Field Guide to Your Backyard



### Campfire Memories

Darkness around the campfire always seemed to cove in and out around me when I was a kid. When I was not mesmerized by the flames that placed me into a trance, I would find myself staring out into the darkness trying to figure out the sounds of the night. When winter had arrived and we were camping or having a fire on the river bank during gigging season, I was often fascinated by the excited rapid cheeps of flying squirrels that in the warmer months the sounds of insects overshadowed. I found the gliding mammals to be very social and in the winter time they huddled together to stay warm; they are among the most nocturnal of Missouri animals. It is common for five to seven flying squirrels to be seen together and the most I've heard about is near twenty at one time. Midwinter is the time they have their first litter and behaviors change when females begin to defend their home range.

As a kid I would try to spot them with a flashlight and after a quick glimpse they would disappear into the darkness. Now years later I advise people to shine their flashlight on their birdfeeder to catch sight of this unique member of Missouri's wildlife. If you live in the country or a suburban area forested with oaks and hickories, you have a good chance of seeing them. If you do not have enough natural cavities in your area, nesting boxes can be erected. They are fascinating creatures that can add so much to your wildlife viewing enjoyment and your campfire stories. If you would like a copy of nesting box plans or our *Woodworking for Wildlife* for a Saturday project please let us know and we will be glad to send them to you.

- Jeff Cantrell,  
Conservation Education  
and Outreach



## Ask the Naturalist

### DO SNAKES HIBERNATE?

Frogs, snakes and turtles don't exactly hibernate, but they go into what's called torpor. When animals hibernate they are in a state of inactivity (lower body temperature, metabolic rate, and slower breathing). Torpor is a state of decreased activity (reduced body temperature and rate of metabolism). Snakes become torpid during cold weather and seek shelter in a den or crevice. They may spend the winter in a tangle of other snakes-sometimes different species of snakes. This led to the myth that Black Rat Snakes will mate with Copperheads. On warm winter days, snakes

can come out of their torpid state and hunt. But they will return to their den when the temperature drops.

Come by the Joplin office to see the live snakes on display!



Amy Juhala, Naturalist,  
Amy.Juhala@mdc.mo.gov





# Winter Events



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## Missouri Department of Conservation Joplin Office Program Registration

All programs are free and require registration unless stated otherwise; please contact the Joplin Conservation Office at (417) 629-3423 to register. **If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so someone on the waiting list may attend.**



## January

- 17 Saturday, Eagle Days, Call Springfield Conservation Nature Center for more information: 417-888-4237
- 16 Friday, 10:00 a.m., Owl Program, All Ages, Shell Knob Public Library  
Open to the general public, no registration required.
- 16 Friday, 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Owl Prowl, All Ages, Walter Woods Conservation Area  
Don't miss a "hootin'" good time! Dress for the evening weather.
- 17 Saturday, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m., Feeding Backyard Birds, Children 6 through Adult, Walter Woods Conservation Area  
Learn how to attract birds to your yard. We will make homemade suet feeders for everyone to take home!
- 17 Saturday, 4:00 p.m., Short-Eared Owl Hike, All Ages, Wildcat Park  
We'll meet at Wildcat Park and carpool (site to be determined) to call in our feathered friends!
- 23 Friday, 10:00 a.m., Winter Hike, All Ages, Wildcat Park
- 23 Friday, 4:00 p.m., Winter Hike, All Ages, Wildcat Park
- 24 Saturday, 2:00 p.m. - Dusk, Eagle Viewing, Stella, MO  
Come by Veterans Park in Stella, MO to learn about eagles! We will have the spotting scopes set up to see these birds up close!
- 27 Tuesday, 1:30 p.m., Owl Program, All Ages, Aurora Public Library  
Open to the general public, no registration required.

## February

- Sugar Snow!
- 6 Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., All Ages, Walter Woods Conservation Area
- 7 Saturday, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., All Ages, Wildcat Glade Conservation & Audubon Cen.
- 7 Saturday, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m., All Ages, Wildcat Glade Conservation & Audubon Cen.
- "It's a sugar snow," he said.  
"Why is it a sugar snow, Pa?"  
Laura Ingalls Wilder, Little House in the Big Woods
- Join Laura Ingalls Wilder as she reads a recollection of her first sugar snow and the dance at Grandpa's. Then hike through the "Big Woods" as she shows us how to tap a tree to collect sap. Maple syrup is the reward! Help us sample this treat that Laura says is even better than Christmas candy!
- 10 Tuesday, 1:00 p.m., Naturescaping, All Ages, Shell Knob Public Library  
Open to the general public, no registration required.
- 17 Tuesday, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m., Introduction to Trout Fishing, Families, Wildcat Glade Conservation & Audubon Center

## March

- 17 Tuesday, 6:00 p.m. Introduction to Turkey Hunting, Children 6 thru Adult, Walter Woods CA
- 19 Thursday, 7:00 p.m., Lecture-Our Migratory Song Birds: MO's Tropical Connection, Adults, Wildcat Glade Conservation and Audubon Center  
No registration required
- 26 Thursday, 5:30 p.m., Archery Basics, Adults and Children 12 and up, Walter Woods CA
- 28 Saturday, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m., Meet a Snake!, All Ages, Walter Woods CA
- 28 Saturday, 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., Meet a Snake!, All Ages, Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center  
Join a naturalist as we dispel myths and learn about these misunderstood Missouri creatures. Then we'll get up close and personal with the real thing!
- Tree Selection and Planting Workshops**
- 23 Monday, 6:30 p.m., New-Mac Electric Community Room, Anderson
- 24 Tuesday, 6:30 p.m., Community Center, SW Corner of County Rd. and Maple St., Monett
- 26 Thursday, 6:30 p.m., City Hall Council Chamber, Mt. Vernon
- 30 Monday, 6:30 p.m., MDC Office meeting room, El Dorado Springs
- 31 Tuesday, 6:30 p.m., Cafeteria, Elementary School, 408 Locust, Lockwood
- April 2, Thursday, 6:30 p.m., Wildcat Glades Conservation and Audubon Center,

31 Saturday, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.  
Winter Hike at Kellogg Lake Families

Kellogg Lake Park, Carthage  
Hiking isn't just for summer!  
Bundle up as we explore the Wild Winter World at Kellogg Lake Park in Carthage, MO.

Discover Nature Families

are programs that help families

discover

and explore nature

together. Parents, kids,

grandparents, aunts, uncles...

All forms of families are welcome!



14 Saturday, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

MO's Top Ten Most

Romantic Animals

Families

Walter Woods

Conservation Area

David Letterman's got

nothing on this top ten list! Bring

the family and enjoy a Valentine

afternoon counting down MO's

Top 10 Most Romantic Animals.

Who will make the list? The

Sassy Skunk?

The Suave

Salamander?

Come to

Walter Woods

and find out!



21 Saturday 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

What's the Poop?

Families

Walter Woods

Conservation

Area



Poop, or SCAT is a great way to learn about what animals eat and where they have been.

In this program we will learn

about animal signs and take a

hike in search of tracks, animal

homes, feathers, bones, and

scat. Bring the whole fam-

ily, dress for the weather and

come ready to hike!

Hang this page on  
your refrigerator!

Don't forget to register  
for programs!